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**Best of the Worst Crashes**

By: NICHOLAS CIAMBRONE

Ever wonder what crashes in motorsports history could be considered the worst of all-time?

9. Alex Zanardi loses his legs

In 2001, the C.A.R.T series was at Euro Speedway in Lausitz, Germany when Zanardi lost control of his car. As he spun, Alex Tagliani crashed into him taking the front half of Zanardi’s car off, and his legs. Zanardi survived and continues to race with prosthetic legs.

13. 1998 Belgium GP Start

Starting in the wet, the Grand Prix got off to a bang when David Coultard lost control of his McLaren, and spun in front of the field. By the end half the field was involved, one of the largest crashes in Formula One history.

12. Jerry Caminito 1994 Crash

In 1995 Funny Car driver Jerry Caminito blew a rear tire, sending him into the barrier at over 200 miles per hour. His car was completely destroyed but Caminito miraculously survived.

11. Niki Lauda Nurburgring

A measure of trackside safety ever since it occurred, Niki Lauda’s 1976 crash at the Nurburgring nearly killed him. His Ferarri burst into flames and other drivers were the only ones in the area to help him escape the burning vehicle.

10. Tetsuya Ota Explosion

After a fellow driver’s Porsche spun out of control, Ota struck it in the rear, rupturing its fuel tank and exploding his car into flames. After being on fire for over 90 seconds he finally escaped after other drivers helped him get out. He suffered severe burns, and never raced again.

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5. Roger Williamson burns in car

In his second Formula One race, his car had a tire failure that caused it to flip over and burst into flames. A fellow driver David Purley stopped to help. Inept marshals, unsure of what to do, did nothing as Purley pleaded for them to help. After several minutes Williamson died of smoke inhalation.

8. Dale Earnhardt’s Final 500

In 2001, Dale Earnhardt was in third place in the Daytona 500. On the last lap his car spun into the wall at over 160 mph head-on. His seatbelt failed as his head smashed into the steering wheel, bending the metal it was constructed with. Earnhardt was pronounced dead once he arrived at the hospital

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7. Dan Wheldon’s Last Race

In Las Vegas on Oct. 16, 2011, Wheldon crashed in the rear tire of a car at over 200 mph. he proceeded to fly in the air over 100 yards before contacting the wall and catch fence. He would be pronounced dead the hospital due to “unsurvivable injuries”.

3. Tom Pryce and a Marshal are killed

In the 1977 South African Grand Prix, Renzo Zorzi’s car started to smoke and had a slight fire. Two marshals ran across the track to extinguish the flames when the real disaster began. The first official barely made it across the track, but the second was not so lucky. A 19 year old named Frederick Jansen Van Buren was struck by Tom Pryce who was driving at 170mph. Van Buren’s body was split in half, so mutilated he was not identifiable. Pryce was struck by the fire extinguisher nearly decapitating him; his helmet strap pulled his head off. The extinguisher flew over the grandstand and landed in a parking lot.

4. McDonald and Sachs at Indy

In1964 David McDonald and Eddie Sachs collided and both of their cars burst into flames. Both drivers were killed in the incident and it was the first time an Indianapolis 500 was ended because of an accident.

6. Gilles Villeneuve Ejected

In 1982 at the Zolder Circuit, Gilles Villeneuve was involved in a fatal accident. As his car began to flip he was ejected from the car and thrown into a catch fence. Safety Marshals rushed to his aid, but it was to no avail. He died on his way to the hospital.

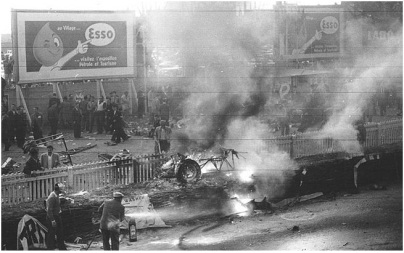
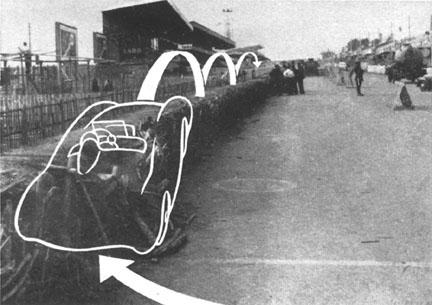
1. 1955 Le Mans Disaster

Some call accidents of famous drivers dying as the “worst”. But the 1955 Le Mans disaster is the worst accident in racing history. Mike Hawthorn noticed late that his crew was signaling him to pit, so he slammed on his brakes. Lance Macklin saw him do this and lost control of his car, who slide across the track. Pierre Levegh, another driver launched off the back of Macklin’s car. The car flipped and burst into flames immediately. Body parts were ripped off the cars and flew into the crowd killing numerous people in the crowd, even decapitating some. When officials tried to spray the magnesium body of Macklin’s car it burst throwing flames everywhere kill more. In total, 5 Marshals died, 83 spectators were killed, and 120 more were injured, making the 1955 Le Mans disaster the worst in racing history.

2. 1957 Mille Miglia Disaster

 In 1957, Alfonso de Portago lost control of his Ferrari when his tire went flat. He flipped into a crowd of onlookers, killing 10 people. Five of those were children, unfortunately. Portago and his co-driver Edmond Nelson were both killed instantly. Portago was nearly split in-half when the marshals found the car.

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